

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

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5 A multibeam scanning optical apparatus comprises a
light source, an incident optical system, an optical
deflector, a scanning optical system, a detection
optical element, and a photodetector. A plurality of
10 light beams modulated in accordance with information
signals are emitted from the light source and lead to
the optical deflector, typically a rotary polygon
mirror, by way of the incident optical system,
typically a collimator lens and a cylindrical lens.
The light beams deflected by the optical deflector are
then focussed on a surface to be scanned, typically a
15 photosensitive drum, by way of the scanning optical
system having an $f\theta$ characteristic. Part of the
deflected light beams are lead to the photodetector by
way of the detection optical system in order to control
the timing of the start of scanning so that the centers
of the scanning areas of the plurality of light beams
agree with each other on the surface to be scanned. In
20 case of a color image forming apparatus comprising a
plurality of scanning optical apparatus, the above
control scheme can be applied even when the scanning
optical apparatus have a single beam light source.

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